

REMARKS

Upon entry of the present amendment, claims 2-5, 15-17 and 20 will have been canceled while claims 1, 10 and 19 will have been amended. Additionally, claims 21-26 will have been submitted for consideration by the Examiner. In view of the herein contained amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of each of the outstanding rejections set forth in the present application. Such action is respectfully requested and is now believed to be appropriate and proper.

In the outstanding Official Action, claims 1, 4, 6, 7, 10-14, 16 and 18-20 were rejected under U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by LEMELSON (U.S. Patent No. 6,293,282). Claims 8 and 9 were rejected under U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over LEMELSON in view of KOBAYASHI et al. (Japanese Patent Application No. JP 2002-233575).

The Examiner indicated claims 2 3, 5, 15 and 17 are objected to for depending upon a rejected base claim. However, the Examiner indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten into independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In this regard, and without in any manner acquiescing in the propriety of either of the Examiner's rejections, Applicants have merely, in order to expedite the allowance and issuance of the present application, rewritten each of the independent claims in the present application to include the subject matter identified by the Examiner as allowable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request, for reasons at least in accordance with the Examiner's indication, an indication of the allowability of all the

claims in the present application. Such action is respectfully requested and is now believed to be appropriate and proper.

In particular claim 1 now includes the limitations of claims 1 and 2, while claim 19 now includes the limitations of claims 19 and 2. Claims 21-23 comprise the limitations of claim 1 with claims 3, 4 and 5, and 16 and 17. Claims 24-26 comprise the limitations of claim 19 with claims 3, 4 and 5, and 16 and 17. In view of the above amendments and new claims, claims 2-5, and 15-17 have been cancelled.

In the present amendment of the claims, Applicants have further modified the language of the claims to enhance clarity as well as to ensure further compliance with U.S. idiom syntax and grammar.

In view of the herein contained amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of each of the outstanding rejections, together with an indication of the allowability of all the claims pending in the present application, in due course.

Applicants note that the status of the present application is after final rejection. Further, Applicants note that once a final rejection is issued, one does not have a right to amend an application. However, in the present situation, Applicants respectfully submit that entry of the present amendment is in accordance with the guidelines under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 and are thus respectfully requesting entry thereof.

Applicants note that each of the independent claims remaining in the present application have been amended so as to include limitations indicated to be allowable in the Examiner's Official Action. Accordingly, although several additional dependent claims have been submitted based upon subject matter not explicitly indicated to be

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allowable, Applicants nevertheless submit that entry of the present amendment is appropriate and proper. An action to such effect is respectfully requested, in due course.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

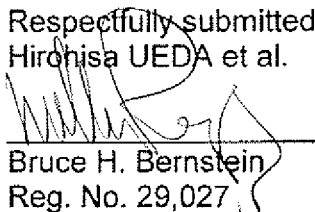
Applicants have made a sincere effort to place the present application in condition for allowance and believe that they have now done so. Applicants have amended the claims to enhance clarity, compliance with U.S. idiom syntax and grammar as well as to incorporate subject matter admitted to be allowable by the Examiner into each of the independent claims. Accordingly, Applicants have clearly placed the present application in condition for allowance at least in accordance with the Examiner's indication. Applicants thus respectfully request entry of the present amendment, reconsideration and withdrawal of each of the outstanding rejections and an indication of the allowability of all the claims pending in the present application, in due course.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this Response, or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

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